

Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCCT-02 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

AID-20 IO-14 DRC-01 /120 W

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P 200945Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3864

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 3191

EO 11652 GDS

TAGS: MILI, KS

SUBJECT: MILITARY RESERVIST DESERTERS HOLD HOSTAGES

1. THREE ARMED DESERTERS FROM SEOUL ARMY RESERVE UNIT HAVE OCCUPIED TEA ROOM AT UNESCO BUILDING IN DOWNTOWN SEOUL SINCE MORNING MAY 20, WHILE HOLDING 32 PERSONS HOSTAGE. ACCORDING RADIO AND PRESS REPORTS AS MANY AS 300 POLICE AND MILITARY TROOPS HAVE AREA BLOCKED OFF AND ARE AT THIS WRITING ATTEMPTING PERSUADE MEN TO GIVE UP.

2. EPISODE BEGAN WHEN THREE PRIVATES REPORTEDLY DESERTED THEIR RESERVE UNIT ON OUTSKIRTS OF SEOUL BEFORE DAYBREAK, COMANDEERED SEDAN, THEN AFTER DRIVING SOUTH ON PUSAN EXPRESSWAY, TOOK OVER BUS AND RETURNED TO SEOUL. IN COURSE THEIR RETURN MEN KILLED ONE HIGHWAY PATROLMAN WHO PURSUED THEM, HAD BRIEF RIFLE EXCHANGE WITH POLICE AT HAN RIVER BRIDGE ENTRANCE TO SEOUL, AND FINALLY GAINED ACCESS TO UNESCO BUILDING. THREE OF HOSTAGES ARE FROM BUS; REMAINDER WERE TEA ROOM OCCUPANTS.

3. FUGITIVES MOTIVES STILL UNCERTAIN. ACCORDING OFFICIAL SOURCES WHO HAVE BEEN IN TELEPHONE AND
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RADIO CONTACT WITH THEM, THEY HAVE INDICATED ANGER

AT THEIR RESERVE UNIT PLATOON LEADER WHO THEY CLAIM ATTEMPTED TO EXTRACT BRIBES FROM THEM, THEN BEAT THEM WHEN THEY REFUSED. AP REPORTS THAT THREE MEN HAVE TOLD NEWSMEN IN TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS THAT TWO "FRIENDS" HAD JOINED THEM AND THAT THEY WERE PROTESTING "PRESENT SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN WHICH YOUNGER GENERATION CAN HARDLY EXPECT TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY OLDER GENERATION." ONE SOLDIER REPORTED AS SAYING "HE WAS ESPECIALLY DISCONTENTED WITH BEATING AND OTHER TREATMENT OF SOLDIERS BY SENIORS WHO OFTEN DEMANDED MONEY OR EXPECTED TO BE TREATED WITH DRINKS."

4. POLICE SOURCES INDICATE THEY STILL TRYING TO NEGOTIATE WITH MEN TO COME OUT, THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO FURTHER SHOOTING SCENES OR INJURIES SINCE HAN RIVER BRIDGE INCIDENT IN THE MORNING. MEN HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY DO NOT WISH TO KILL INNOCENT VICTIMS, BUT HAVE WARNED POLICE THEY MAY HAVE TO IF CHALLENGED.
ERICSON

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